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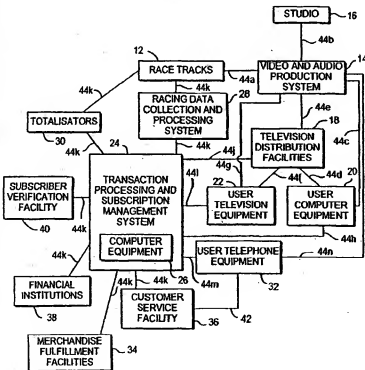
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(54) Title: INTERACTIVE WAGERING SYSTEM WITH AUDIO CLIPS



(57) Abstract: An interactive wagering service is provided that allows users to order audio clips of races, interviews, handicapping information, news, weather, and other information. A user may order audio clips, set reminders for audio clips and may listen to audio clips using user equipment. The user equipment may be a set-top box, a personal computer, a handheld computing device, a cellular telephone, or a telephone. The user may place wagers on horse races using the user equipment. The audio clips may be audio clips of the horse races on which the wagers were placed. Audio clips may be provided in real time or on demand.

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INTERACTIVE WAGERING SYSTEM WITH AUDIO CLIPS

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to interactive wagering, and more particularly, to interactive wagering using telephones and other devices to listen to audio clips related to wagering such as audio clips of horse races.

Wagering is a popular leisure activity. For example, many racing fans wager on events such as horse, dog, and harness racing. However, it may be inconvenient to attend racing events in person. Not all racing fans have sufficient time to visit racetracks as often as they would like and some fans have difficulties in obtaining suitable transportation to the track. Off-track betting establishments are available for fans who cannot attend racing events in person, but fans must still travel to the off-track betting establishments.

As a result, interactive wagering services have been developed that allow users to place off-track wagers using personal computers connected to the Internet, standard telephones, or set-top boxes. After a user has placed a wager on a particular race, the user may wish to view a video of the race. Race videos may be available on television (e.g., as part of a

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racetrack simulcast). Race videos may also be available to users as part of the user's interactive wagering service. If the user has access to a set-top box or personal computer on which the appropriate software to support the interactive wagering service has been installed, the user may be able to view a video clip of a race. Users without access to this equipment (either because they do not own such equipment or because they are traveling or are otherwise separated from their usual equipment) may miss out on an enjoyable part of the racing experience by not being able to view videos the race.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an interactive wagering system that allows users to access racing audio clips over a telephone or other device.

Summary of the Invention

This and other objects of the invention are accomplished in accordance with the principles of the present invention by providing an interactive wagering system that allows users to access an interactive wagering service using telephones and other devices. Telephones may be cellular telephones or other portable telephones or may be standard non-cellular telephones. The user may order audio clips of races. For example, the user may order an audio clip or a race when the user places a wager on a particular race.

The user may listen to race audio clips in real time (as the race is being run) or may listen to race audio clips after races have been run. Fees may be charged for using the audio clip service.

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In general, the interactive wagering service may be accessed using equipment such as cellular telephones, non-cellular telephones, personal computers (including handheld computing devices), and user
5 television equipment (e.g., equipment based on set-top boxes). Users may interact with the wagering service using one platform to perform one function and a second platform to perform another function. For example, users may place wagers by submitting wagering data
10 using one platform and may access race results using another platform.

If desired, the audio clip service may be used with multiple platforms. For example, a user may be able to order and pay for an audio clip using a
15 personal computer. Later, when the race is being run, the user may listen to the audio clip over a telephone.

The interactive wagering service may provide the user with an opportunity to set reminders for audio clips. For example, after the user has placed a wager on a race, the user may direct the interactive wagering
20 service to alert the user when the audio clip for that race is available. When the race is just about to begin, the user may be alerted that the audio clip is about to begin by a telephone call, an audible tone, a
25 visual reminder such as a visual reminder message displayed on the cellular telephone display, an e-mail message, paging message, or other alphanumeric message sent to the cellular telephone, etc. A reminder may be provided to the user by placing a telephone call to the
30 user with automatic dialing equipment and providing an audio reminder message. If desired, the audio clip may be played instead of the reminder message or

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immediately following the reminder message. Reminders may be provided to other platforms supported by the system. For example, reminders may be provided to users at user television equipment (e.g., television
5 equipment based on set-top boxes or the like), user computer equipment (e.g., a personal computer or handheld computing device), etc.

A transaction processing and subscription management system may be provided to handle wagers and
10 users' accounts. The transaction processing and subscription management system may receive racing data such as handicapping information and current racing information from a racing data collection and processing system. The transaction processing and
15 subscription management system may interact with totalisators to handle wagers and information on current odds and the like.

In addition to race audio clips, other audio information related to races and the like may be
20 distributed to the user in real-time or on demand. The transaction processing and subscription management system may be used to distributed such audio information or the audio information may be distributed by a video and audio production system or other
25 suitable facilities.

Audio-based services that may be provided with the interactive wagering service include audio-based advertising, audio-based interview clips (e.g., interviews with jockeys and the like), audio clips
30 containing handicapping information, audio clips containing racing news or weather, audio clips promoting racing products, etc. These audio-based

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services may be accessed through a telephone or other user device (e.g., a set-top box, personal computer, handheld computing device, etc.).

Further features of the invention, its nature
5 and various advantages will be more apparent from the accompanying drawings and the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an
10 illustrative interactive wagering system in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a diagram of an illustrative cellular telephone in accordance with the present invention.

15 FIG. 3 is an illustrative display screen that may be used to provide the user with an opportunity to order an audio clip in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of illustrative steps
20 involved in providing the user with an opportunity to order an audio clip when placing a wager in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing the user with an opportunity to
25 order an audio clip in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing the user with an opportunity to set a reminder for an audio clip in accordance with the
30 present invention.

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FIG. 7 is an illustrative display screen that may be used to provide the user with an opportunity to electronically place a wager with a cellular telephone in accordance with the present invention.

5 FIG. 8 is an illustrative display screen that may be used to order an audio clip and set a reminder when placing a wager in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart of illustrative steps
10 involved in providing a reminder for an audio clip in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing audible or visual reminders of audio clips in accordance with the present invention.

15 FIG. 11 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in using e-mail, paging messages, and the like to remind the user of a race and audio clip in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a flow chart of illustrative steps
20 involved in providing the user with an opportunity to order audio clips of various different types in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a flow chart of illustrative steps
involved in providing the user with an opportunity to
25 order audio clips in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 14 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing the user with audio clip delivery options in accordance with the present invention.

30 FIG. 15 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing users with recorded audio clips

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and access to upcoming audio clips in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 16 is a flow chart of illustrative steps involved in providing users with an opportunity to order upcoming audio clips in accordance with the invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

An illustrative interactive wagering system 10 in accordance with the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. Aspects of the invention apply to various different types of wagering, but are described herein primarily in the context of interactive wagering on races (e.g., horse races) for specificity and clarity.

System 10 supports an interactive wagering service that includes audio-clip features. Races may be run at racetracks 12, which may be located at various geographic locations. Races run at the racetracks may be simulcast to television viewers. For example, simulcast videos may be provided to users with satellite receivers or to off-track betting establishments via satellite.

Real-time videos for races and audio for those races from racetracks 12 may be provided to video and audio production system 14 for distribution to users as part of the interactive wagering service. If desired, multiple simulcast videos and audio segments may be provided to video and audio production system 14 in real time. Talent (e.g., commentators) for the interactive wagering service may be located at studio 16. Studio 16 may provide a video feed (including audio) or an audio feed containing commentary and the

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like to video and audio production system 14. Graphic overlays for the wagering service may be added to the service at video and audio production system 14. If desired, the audio information that is provided to video and audio production system 14 may be the audio tracks of racing-related videos that are provided to video and audio production system 14. The audio information need not, however, be associated with a particular video. Purely audio information may be provided to system 14. If desired, video and audio production system 14 may be an audio production system that is primarily or only capable of handling audio.

The audio information provided to video and audio production system 14 may include audio clips for races, interviews with jockeys, weather reports, handicapping information, racing news, advertising information, promotions for products or the like, or any other suitable audio information related to wagering, racing, or the interactive wagering service.

A television wagering channel may be provided by using video and audio production system 14 to combine selected video segments from desired racing simulcasts with the video feed from studio 16 and suitable graphic overlays. Audio from the television wagering channel may be used as audio for the audio-clip features of the interactive wagering service. Video from the television wagering channel may be used as video for video-related features of the service.

If desired, video and audio production system 14 may be used to reformat video simulcasts from racetracks 12. For example, if racetracks 12 provide simulcasts as traditional analog television channels,

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video and audio production system 14 (or a separate facility) may convert these simulcasts or portions of these simulcasts into digital signals (e.g., digital video signals) or into a different number of analog signals. Digital video signals may require less bandwidth than analog video signals and may be appropriate for situations in which videos are to be transmitted over either high or low bandwidth pathways. Low bandwidth pathways may include telephone lines, the Internet, etc. Video and audio production system 14 may separate the audio from the simulcasts or portions of the simulcasts for distribution without video. Video and audio production system 14 may reformat such audio for distribution if desired.

Video and audio production system 14 may provide television distribution facility 18 with video for a television wagering channel including selected simulcast videos, video from studio 16, and graphic overlays to television distribution facilities 18. Audio without video may also be provided to television distribution facility 18.

Video and audio from video and audio production system 14 may be redistributed to user television equipment 22, to user computer equipment 20, and to user telephone equipment 32. Television distribution facilities 16 may be any suitable facilities for supplying television to users, such as cable system headends, satellite systems, broadcast television systems, or other suitable systems or combinations of such systems. User computer equipment 20 may be any suitable computer equipment that supports an interactive wagering application. For example, user

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computer equipment 20 may be a personal computer. User
computer equipment 20 may also be based on a mainframe
computer, a workstation, a networked computer or
computers, a laptop computer, a notebook computer, a
5 handheld computing device such as a personal digital
assistant or other small portable computer, etc.

Each of television distribution facilities 18
may be located at a different geographic location and
may save multiple user television equipment devices.
10 Users with user television equipment 22 may receive
audio and video for the interactive wagering service
from an associated television distribution facility.
User television equipment 22 may include, for example,
a television or other suitable monitor. A television
15 may be used to watch video for the wagering service on
a traditional analog television channel. The
television or a suitable audio system may also be used
to listen to audio for the wagering service. User
television equipment 22 may include a digital or analog
20 set-top box connected to a television distribution
facility 16 by a cable path. A digital set-top box may
be used to receive information for the wagering service
on a digital channel (i.e., as part of a digital data
stream). If desired, user television equipment 22 may
25 contain a satellite receiver, a WebTV box, a personal
computer television (PC/TV), or hardware similar to
such devices into which set-top box capabilities have
been integrated. A recording device such as a
videocassette recorder or digital recording device
30 (e.g., a personal video recorder or digital video
recorder based on hard disk drives or the like) may be
used in user television equipment 22 to store videos.

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The recording device may be separate from or part of the other components of user television equipment 22. These recording devices, audio-only hard-disk-based devices, or other such devices may be used to record
5 audio clips and the like that do not have corresponding video components.

User computer equipment 20 may receive audio and video information for the wagering service using a modem or other suitable communications device. A sound
10 card or similar circuitry may be used to process audio. A video card or other video-capable equipment may be used to receive analog or digital (e.g., moving picture experts group or MPEG) video from a television distribution facility. User computer equipment 20 may
15 also receive information for the interactive wagering service directly from video and audio production system 14 using, for example, a modem link. If desired, the audio and video for the television wagering service may be compressed (e.g., using MPEG techniques). This may
20 be useful, for example, if the path to user computer equipment 20 is a modem connection using telephone links.

Racing-related video and audio may be provided to the user by using video and audio
25 production system 14 or other suitable equipment to route appropriate video and audio clips from the simulcasts or other suitable sources of video and audio information to the user in real time. Video and audio clips may also be collected and stored for later
30 viewing. For example, one or more servers located at racetracks 12, video and audio production system 14, television distribution facilities 18, or other

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suitable locations may be used to store video and audio clips.

Stored video and audio may be played back in real time or downloaded for viewing at user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, or user telephone equipment 32 at a later time. Such video and audio may include video and audio of races, commentary, interviews with jockeys, weather, handicapping information, information promoting certain products, or any other suitable wagering-related or racing-related information.

If desired, real-time or stored video and audio may be provided from racetracks 12 directly to user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, or user telephone equipment 32 over the Internet or a private network or other suitable communications paths without involving video and audio production system 14. Video and audio may also be provided by routing video and audio signals through equipment located elsewhere in system 10. For example, video and audio may be routed through transaction processing and subscription management system 24.

Transaction processing and subscription management system 24 may contain computer equipment 26 and other equipment for supporting system functions such as transaction processing (e.g., handling tasks related to wagers, product purchasing, adjusting the amount of funds in user accounts based on the outcomes of wagers, video and audio clip ordering, etc.), data distribution (e.g., for distributing racing data to the users), and subscriber management (e.g., features related to opening an account for a user, closing an

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account, allowing a user to add or withdraw funds from an account, changing the user's address or personal identification number, etc.). If desired, transaction processing and subscription management system 24 may be used to support a subset of these functions.

Databases within transaction processing and subscription management system 24 or associated with system 24 may be used to store racing data, wagering data and other transaction data, and subscriber data such as 'such as information on the user's current account balance, past wagering history, individual wager limits, personal identification number, billing addresses, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, social security numbers, etc. Using such databases may allow the user to access information more quickly and allows for central administration of the wagering service.

If desired, racing video and audio services and other services may be provided using servers and other equipment located at transaction processing and subscription management system 24. For example, video and audio clips may be provided to the user on-demand. Interactive advertisements may be provided to the user. When the user selects a desired advertisement, transaction processing and subscription management system 24 may provide additional information or other services related to the advertisement to the user.

Product ordering services may be implemented using computer equipment at transaction processing and subscriber management system 24 to handle orders and to assist in adjusting the appropriate account of the user accordingly. Orders may be fulfilled using merchandise

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fulfillment facilities 34. Merchandise fulfillment facilities 34 may be operated solely to provide merchandise fulfillment or may be associated with independently-operated mail-order or on-line

- 5 businesses. Similar facilities may be used to allow users to order services.

Statistical racing data such as the post times for each race, jockey names, runner names and the number of races associated with each track, 10 handicapping information (e.g., information on past performances such as the number of wins and losses for the past year, etc.), and weather conditions at various tracks may be provided by racing data collection and processing system 28. Some of the data may be 15 collected from racetracks 12 and some may be provided by third party information sources such as Axcis Pocket Information Network, Inc. of Santa Clara, California or other suitable data sources.

Racing data may also be provided from 20 totalisators 30. Totalisators 30 are the computer systems that may be used to handle wagers made at the racetracks, made at off-track betting establishments, and made using interactive wagering system 10. Totalisators 30 generate wagering odds in real time. 25 Totalisators 30 generate these odds based on information on which wagers are being placed (e.g., based on information on which wagers are being placed on races at racetracks 12). Totalisators 30 are , available from companies such as Amtote International, 30 Inc. of Hunt Valley, Maryland. Totalisators 30 may be associated with individual racetracks 12 or groups of racetracks 12. Totalisators 30 may communicate with

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one another using a communication protocol known as the Intertote Track System Protocol (ITSP). This allows totalisators 30 to share wagering pools. Totalisators 30 may provide racing data including information on the current races at racetracks 12, the number of races associated with each racetrack, win, place, and show odds and pool totals for each horse or other runner, and exacta, trifecta, and quinella payoff predictions and pool totals for every possible combination of runners. Totalisators 30 may also provide current odds and other real-time racing data for other types of wagers. Totalisators 30 may provide the time until post time for each race.

Totalisators 30 may provide race results, such as the order-of-finish list for at least the first three positions and payoff values versus a standard wager amount for win, place, and show, for each runner in the finish list. Payoff values may be provided for winning complex wager types such as exacta, trifecta, quinella, pick-n (where n is the number of races involved in the pick-n wager), and daily double. The payoff values may be accompanied by a synopsis of the associated finish list.

Totalisators 30 may also provide program information of the type typically provided in printed racing programs. Such program information may include early odds, early scratches, race descriptions (including the distance of each race and the race surface - grass, dirt, artificial turf, etc.), allowed class ratings (based on a fixed ratio of external criteria), purse value (payoff to winning runner),

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allowed age range of runners, and the allowed number of wins and starts for each runner.

If desired, some of the information provided to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 by totalisators 30 (such as the program information or other suitable racing data) may be provided by racing data collection and processing system 28. Similarly, some of the information provided to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 by racing data collection and processing system 28 may be provided by totalisators 30. Moreover, the foregoing examples of different suitable types of racing data are merely illustrative. Any suitable data related to racing may be provided to transaction processing and subscription management system if desired.

Transaction processing and subscription management system 24 provides the racing data to users at user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, and user telephone equipment 32 for use in following race results and developing wagers. If desired, racing data may be provided to users using paths that do not directly involve transaction processing and subscription management system 24. For example, racing data may be provided from racing data collection and processing system 28 to user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, or user telephone equipment 32 using the Internet or other suitable communications paths.

User telephone equipment 32 may be a conventional telephone, a cordless telephone, a cellular telephone or other portable wireless

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telephone, or any other suitable telephone equipment. Users at user television equipment 22 and user computer equipment 20 may view information on the racing data on a television or other suitable monitor and may listen
5 to racing data in audio form. Users at user telephone equipment 32 may listen to racing data and other racing-related audio using an interactive voice system. User telephone equipment 32 may be based on cellular telephones with displays. Users may view racing data
10 displayed on such displays.

Users who wish to place wagers may establish an account at transaction processing and subscription management system 24. An account may also be established at one of totalisators 30. The user and
15 the interactive wagering services may have their own bank accounts at financial institutions 38. A user may set up an account electronically by using user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, or user telephone equipment 32 to interact with the
20 subscriber management functions of transaction processing and subscription management system 24. If desired, accounts may be established with the interactive wagering service with the assistance of customer service representatives at customer service
25 facility 36. Customer service facility 36 may be at the same location as transaction processing and subscription management system 24, may be part of system 24, or may be located remote from system 24. Customer service representatives at customer service
30 facility 36 may be reached by telephone. If user telephone equipment 32 is used to access the interactive wagering service, for example, user

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telephone equipment 32 may be used to reach the customer service representative using communications path 42. If user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 is being used with the service, a
5 telephone at the same location as that equipment may be used to reach the customer service representative.

The user's identity may be checked using social security number information or other identification information with the assistance of
10 subscriber verification facility 40. The services of subscriber verification facility 40 are used to ensure that the user lives in a geographic area in which wagering is legal, that the user is of a legal age, and that the identification information (e.g., the user's
15 social security number) matches the name provided by the user. If the user is using a cellular telephone or handheld computing device, the user's present physical location may be determined by determining which general part of the cellular telephone network is being
20 accessed by the user or by using the cellular network or a handset-based location device such as a global positioning system (GPS) receiver in the body of the cellular telephone to pinpoint the user's location. This location information may be used to verify that
25 the user is located in a geographic area where wagering is legal.

In a typical enrollment process, the user provides personal information to the interactive wagering service and provides funds with a credit card
30 or funds from the user's bank account. The interactive wagering service sets up an account for the user at transaction processing and subscription management

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system 24 and directs one of totalisators 30 to set up a new account for the user at the totalisator. The totalisator is also directed to credit the user's account to reflect the amount of funds provided by the user. After the user places a wager and wins or loses, the totalisator adjusts the user's totalisator account to reflect the outcome of the wager. The totalisator may periodically inform the interactive wagering service of the adjusted balance in the user's account. This may be accomplished using any suitable technique (e.g., periodically, continuously, on-request, etc.). For example, reports may be collected periodically (e.g., once a day in an end-of-day report) and provided to the interactive wagering service to reconcile the account balances at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 with the account balances at totalisators 30.

If the user makes a balance inquiry, the inquiry may be passed to the appropriate totalisator by transaction processing and subscription management system 24. If the user is charged a fee for subscribing to the service, the service may debit the fee from the user's account at the transaction processing and subscription management system 24.

The accounts at totalisators 30 and transaction processing and subscription management system 24 are typically maintained separately, because the business entities that operate totalisators 30 and transaction processing and subscription management system 24 are independent. If desired, financial functions related to opening and maintaining user accounts and the like may be handled using computer

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equipment at another location such as one of financial institutions 38 or other location remote from totalisators 30 and system 24. Such financial functions may also be implemented primarily at a
5 totalisator 30 or primarily at the transaction processing and subscription management system 24 if desired.

Users at user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, and user telephone equipment 32
10 may place wagers by providing wagering data and otherwise interacting with transaction processing and subscription management system 24. The interactive wagering service may provide a user at user television
15 equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, or user telephone equipment 32 that has display capabilities with screens containing various racing data. For example, the user may be presented with screens that allow the user to view the current odds for horses in an upcoming race at a given track. Such data may also
20 be provided as audio.

The service may provide the user with interactive screens containing menus and selectable options that allow the user to specify the type of
wager in which the user is interested and the desired
25 wager amount. With a set-top box arrangement, for example, the user may use a remote control or wireless keyboard to navigate the various menus and selectable options. With a personal computer, the user may use a
30 keyboard, mouse, trackball, touch pad, or other suitable input or pointing device. With a cellular telephone with a display, the user may use buttons on the telephone. When the user has made appropriate

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selections to define a desired wager, the user television equipment, user computer equipment, or user telephone equipment may transmit wagering data for the wager to transaction processing and subscription management system 24. The service may provide audio-based menus and options. Voice recognition techniques may be used to allow users to interact with the service.

Users with telephones may also interact with the service using an interactive voice response system located at transaction processing and subscription management system 24. The interactive voice response system may present menu options to the user in the form of audio prompts (e.g., "press 1 to select a \$2 wager amount," etc.). The user may interact with the service by pressing the corresponding buttons on a touch tone telephone. This allows the user to electronically place wagers. User telephone equipment 32 that is based on cellular telephones allows the user to interact with the wagering service in this way. User telephone equipment 32 that is based on cellular telephones with messaging and display capabilities also allows the user to interact visually with the interactive wagering service.

The components of system 10 may be interconnected using various communications paths 44. Communications paths 44 may include satellite paths, coaxial cable paths, fiber-optic paths, twisted pair paths, other wire or cable-based links, wireless paths through free space, or any other suitable paths or combination of such paths. Communications over paths 44 may involve analog transmissions, digital

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transmissions, wireless transmissions, microwave transmissions, radio-frequency transmissions, optical transmissions, audio transmissions, or any other suitable type of transmissions or combination of such

5 transmissions. Communications may involve Internet transmissions, private network transmissions, packet-based transmissions, television channel transmissions, transmissions in the vertical blanking interval of a television channel or on a television sideband, MPEG

10 transmissions, etc. Communications may involve wireless pager or other messaging transmissions. Communications paths 44 may include cable connected to cable modems, digital subscriber lines, integrated services digital network (ISDN) lines, or any other

15 suitable paths. Examples of suitable communications paths are described below. Those examples are, however, merely illustrative. Any of the communications path arrangements described above, other suitable arrangements, or combinations of such

20 arrangements may be used if desired.

Communications paths that carry video and particularly uncompressed analog video or lightly-compressed or full-screen digital video generally use more bandwidth than communications paths that carry

25 audio or only data or that carry partial-screen digital video. For example, if it is desired to transmit high-quality simulcasts of races from racetracks 12 to video and audio production system 14, analog or digital videos may be transmitted from racetracks 12 to video

30 production system 14 over path 44a using satellite links. Pure audio may also be transmitted in this way. Video (including its audio tracks) or pure audio may be

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transmitted from studio 16 to video production system 14 over path 44b using a satellite link or a terrestrial path such as a fiber-optic path. Lower bandwidth paths may generally be used for transmissions of audio without accompanying video. If desired, studio 16 may be located at the same site as video and audio production system 14, thereby avoiding the need for a long-haul transmission path. Video and audio may be transmitted from video production system 14 to user computer equipment 20 over path 14c using a modem link (using, for example, a digital subscriber line, a telephone network link, a wireless link etc.) The modem link may be made over a private network.

A user with a cable modem may connect a personal computer or other such user computer equipment 20 to an associated cable system headend using path 44d. (The headend in such an arrangement would be one of the television distribution facilities 18 shown in FIG. 1.) The user may then receive video and audio from the headend via cable modem. Video and audio may be provided to the headend over path 44e using a network link, fiber optic links, cable links, microwave links, satellite links, etc. A user with a set-top box or similar device (shown in FIG. 1 as user television equipment 22) may also receive video and audio from a cable system headend using a cable modem or other such communications device over path 44f. In addition, a user with user television equipment may receive video and audio over the Internet or a private network using a telephone-based modem or other such communications device using path 44g. In a system with distributed processing, interactive wagering services may be

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provided using a television distribution facility 18 that includes equipment that supplements or replaces at least some of the equipment at transaction processing and subscription management system 24.

5 If desired, user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 may receive analog or digital video and audio from an associated television distribution facility over the communications paths normally used to distribute television programming
10 (e.g., paths 44f and 44d). For example, video and audio may be received as part of a dedicated interactive wagering service television channel. If video (and its accompanying audio component) is provided as digital signals (e.g., MPEG signals), 10 or
15 more digital videos may be carried on a single analog channel (or one digital video may be carried on one-tenth of the bandwidth of an analog channel). If the videos are not full-screen videos, even more videos may be simultaneously provided without a loss of image
20 quality. Pure audio signals may also be digitally compressed if desired.

Racing-related video and audio may be provided to user telephone equipment 32 over a partially-wireless telephone Internet link or other
25 telephone link using path 44n.

Racing data may accompany the racing video and audio along any of these paths. Moreover, racing-related video and audio may be routed directly from racetracks 12 to user television equipment 22, user
30 computer equipment 20 (e.g., over the Internet or a private network, etc.), or user telephone equipment 32. Racing-related video or audio may be routed through

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transaction processing and subscription management system 24. If a cellular telephone or portable computing device has sufficient display capabilities to support moving images, racing videos may be displayed.

- 5 Racing-related audio and such videos may be provided using any suitable path, such as a direct path from racetracks 12, a path through video and audio production system 14 or other suitable video and audio processing equipment, through a hub such as transaction processing and subscription management system 24, etc.

- Racing-related video and audio may be provided in real time or may be recorded for later distribution. Video and audio content that is not provided in real-time may be downloaded by user television equipment 22, user computer equipment 20, a cellular telephone, or other suitable user equipment at a lower data rate than would otherwise be required and may be downloaded in the background if desired. Such video and audio content may also be provided to the user at real-time video and audio rates so that the user may view the video and listen to the audio.

- Racing data and other information related to the interactive wagering service may be provided to users over paths connected to transaction processing and subscription management system 24. For example, racing data and other data for the service may be provided to user computer equipment 20 over path 44h using a modem link. Path 44h may be a private network path or an Internet path. Path 44h may use telephone lines, digital subscriber lines, ISDN lines, wireless data paths, or any other suitable type of communications links. User television equipment 22 may

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receive data for the wagering service over communications path 44i, which may be a telephone line, digital subscriber line, ISDN line, or other suitable type of communications path and which may use a private network path or an Internet path, etc.

Data for the wagering service may be provided to users via communications path 44j and paths 44f and 44d. Communications path 44j may be provided over a private network, using the public telephone network, using satellite links, or any other suitable type of links. Data from paths such as path 44j may be routed to paths such as paths 44f and 44d directly by associated television distribution facilities 18, or may be buffered at television distribution facilities 18 if desired. Paths 44f and 44d may include coaxial cable and use of paths 44f and 44d may involve the use of cable modems or the like. If data is provided over path 44j and path 44f or path 44d using an Internet protocol, a web browser or similar application running on user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 may be used to access the data. Such application software may also be used to view videos and access audio information and may be used on other platforms (e.g., advanced cellular telephones) if desired.

The communications paths 44k that are used to connect various other components of the system typically do not carry high-bandwidth video or high-bandwidth audio signals. Accordingly, paths 44k may be telephone-like paths that are part of the Internet or a private network. Such paths and various other paths 44

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may be dedicated connections for security, reliability, and economy.

- User telephone equipment 32 may receive information for the wagering service via path 44m. If
- 5 user telephone equipment 32 is a standard (non-cellular) telephone, such information may be in the form of audio prompts ("press 1 to place a wager") and audio racing data ("the current win odds for horse 2 are 5 to 1"). Transaction data processing and
- 10 subscription management system 24 may contain interactive voice response equipment that provides such information to the user and that responds to touch-tone signals from the user when the user responds to prompts by pressing buttons on the user's telephone. The
- 15 interactive voice response equipment may be provided with voice recognition capabilities if desired.

- If user telephone equipment is a cellular telephone, racing data and other information for the interactive wagering service may be provided to the
- 20 user by using a cellular wireless connection as part of path 44m. Users with cellular telephones may be provided with audio prompts using an interactive voice response system located at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 to which the users
- 25 may respond by pressing cellular telephone buttons to generate touch-tone signals.

- Racing data and other information for the interactive wagering service may be provided to cellular telephones in the form of alphanumeric
- 30 messages. Such messages may be transmitted to the user by using paging or other alphanumeric messaging formats or any other suitable data communications scheme. If

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desired, data may be provided to the cellular telephones over the voice channel and decoded by the cellular telephone using modem circuitry or other suitable circuitry. Data may also be provided using
5 any other suitable cellular or wireless path. Regardless of the way in which racing data and other information for the interactive wagering service are provided to the cellular telephone, such information may be provided to the user by displaying it on the
10 cellular telephone display screen or by presenting it in audible form through the speaker of the cellular telephone.

Racing-related information that is provided to the user in the form of audio signals without
15 accompanying video signals may be provided over a telephone link, an Internet link, etc.

Racing data and other interactive wagering service information for the users may be provided in one or more continuous data streams, may be provided
20 periodically (e.g., once per hour or once per day), or may be provided using a client-server arrangement in which data is requested by a client processor (e.g., user television equipment 22, user computer equipment
25 equipment) from a server (e.g., a server implemented using computer equipment 26 at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 or computer equipment at another suitable location. Video and
audio may be provided using any of these techniques.

30 A return communications path between the user and the interactive wagering service may be used to allow the user to place wagers and otherwise interact

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with the interactive wagering service. For example, a user with a standard telephone or a cellular telephone may interact with the service by pressing touch-tone keys on the telephone in response to audio prompts provided by an interactive voice response system at transaction processing and subscription management system 24. If desired, users may call customer service representatives at customer service facility 36 and place wagers with manual assistance. The user of a cellular telephone may interact with the wagering service by selecting menu options and otherwise interacting with information displayed on the cellular telephone. When a selection is made, software implemented on the telephone may be used to assist the user in transmitting appropriate data (e.g., wagering data) to the wagering service. Such data may be transmitted using any suitable technique. For example, data may be transmitted using a wireless data link that is separate from the cellular voice channels. Data may also be transmitted over the voice channel (e.g., using a modem built into the cellular telephone, by automatically generating touch-tone signals that may be recognized by the interactive voice response system at transaction processing and subscription management system 24, or using any other suitable arrangement). These approaches may be used even if the user receives racing data and other information for the service using a platform other than a telephone-based platform.

Users with user television equipment 22 may interact with the service by sending data (e.g., wager data) to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 using path 44i or using paths 44f

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and 44j. Users with user computer equipment 20 may send data (e.g., wager data) to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 via path 44h or paths 44d and 44j. Users at any user equipment may
5 send data for the service to locations other than transaction processing and subscription management system 24. For example, the user may provide information directly to customer service facility 36, etc.

10 If desired, the user may send data to the service at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 using different paths than those used to receive data from transaction processing and subscription management system 24. For example, racing
15 data may be received at user television equipment 22 via paths 44j and 44f, whereas data may be sent by the user from user television equipment 22 to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 using path 44i, etc. Moreover, the paths used to receive
20 certain video and audio information may be different from those used to receive racing data. For example, user television equipment 22 may receive racing-related video and audio using path 44f, but may receive racing data using path 44i. These examples are merely
25 illustrative. Any suitable combination of paths may be used to distribute racing data and other information for the interactive wagering service, any suitable combination of paths may be used to receive video
(including its audio) and audio, and any suitable
30 combination of paths may be used to send data to the wagering service.

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If desired, the user may interact with the wagering service using more than one platform. For example, the user may place a wager using a cellular telephone while the user is traveling to the office.

- 5 When the user arrives at the office, the user may determine the outcome of the wager by listening to an audio clip of the race using the user's office telephone. Later in the day, the user may check for account balance information using a personal computer.
- 10 This is merely an illustrative example. The various wagering platforms may be used in any suitable combination.

- Although system 10 has been described in the context of a system that supports multiple wagering
- 15 platforms, system 10 may support fewer platforms if desired. For example, aspects of the invention may be implemented using a system 10 that only supports telephone wagering, cellular telephone wagering, or wagering using handheld computing devices. If desired,
- 20 system 10 may be configured so that it does not support, for example, personal computer wagering or wagering with user television equipment. The system may support telephones, cellular telephones, and handheld computing devices such as personal digital
- 25 assistants, palm-sized computers, etc. in combination with any other suitable platform.

- An illustrative cellular telephone 46 with which the user may use the interactive wagering service is shown in FIG. 2. Software for the interactive
- 30 wagering service may be used at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 and each of the other components shown in FIG. 1. A portion of the

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software that is used to implement the interactive wagering service may be resident on cellular telephone 46. Cellular telephone 46 may have a memory for storing software instructions and a processor for
5 executing those instructions. A standard telephone may also be used to access the audio features of the interactive wagering service. If desired, at least some of the interactive wagering features described herein may be implemented using a handheld computing
10 device or personal digital assistant such as the Palm V or Palm VII devices of Palm Computing Inc. (a 3Com company) of Mountain View, California instead of a telephone. Such handheld computing devices may have a speaker that allows the user to use the audio features
15 of the interactive wagering service. For clarity and simplicity, the invention will be described primarily in connection with telephones.

Cellular telephone 46 may have an antenna 48 to support wireless communications with transaction
20 processing and subscription management system 24. Communications between telephone 46 and system 24 may use communications path 44m of FIG. 1. Path 44m may include both a wireless portion (e.g., the link from cellular telephone 46 to a nearby antenna connected to
25 the cellular network) and a non-wireless portion (e.g., non-wireless links in the public telephone network). Standard telephones may be connected to transaction processing and subscription management system 24 through links in the public telephone network that do
30 not necessarily involve wireless paths.

A power switch 50 (FIG. 2) may be used to turn on and off cellular telephone 46. A speaker 52

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allows the user to hear conversations and to hear audio prompts from transaction processing and subscription management system 24. Speaker 52 may also be used to play audio clips for the user and to provide other
5 audio-based services. A microphone 54 allows the user to converse with others or to provide voice commands to interactive voice response equipment at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 that has voice recognition capabilities. Display 56 may be
10 a liquid crystal display (black and white or color), a plasma display, a light-emitting diode display, an active matrix display, or any other suitable type of small display screen. Keys 58 allow the user to enter inputs. Numeric keys 60 (including the star and pound
15 key) allow the user to respond to interactive voice response system prompts such as "press 3 to select race 3" and allow the user to enter numbers to select numerically-identified on-screen menu options and the like that are displayed on display 56. If desired,
20 some of the numeric keys 60 may perform secondary functions if, for example, they are pressed and held for at least a predetermined length of time. Clear key 62 may be used to clear characters from display 56. If the user presses and holds clear key 62, the user may
25 be taken back to the initial screen displayed on display 56 upon power up. Navigation key 64 may be used to access menus, make telephone calls, etc. Scroll keys 66 may be used to scroll through menus and to scroll through other items presented on display
30 screen 56.

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The components of a standard telephone include numeric keys and a handset with a microphone and a speaker.

Interactive wagering service software running on cellular telephone 46 may provide visual menu options that allow the user to invoke the interactive wagering application. The wagering application may provide the user with an opportunity to place a wager or use the audio-related features of the application. For example, the user wagering application may provide the user with an opportunity to select a particular racetrack (e.g., Churchill Downs), a race (e.g., race 4), a wager type (e.g., win, place, show, exacta, trifecta, etc.), runners (e.g., a desired horse or horses), wager amount (e.g., \$2), etc.

An illustrative screen 68 that may be displayed by the wagering application on display 56 of cellular telephone 46 is shown in FIG. 3. In the example of FIG. 3, the user has selected a desired racetrack for which the user would like to order an audio clip of a race. Access to the audio clip feature of the wagering application may be provided using any suitable approach, such as displaying an audio clip menu option for the user, allowing the user to press a predetermined sequence of keys on telephone 46, etc.

Screen 68 may contain information 70 on a given race and its racetrack, which have been selected by the user for audio-clip ordering. The wagering application may display an option 72 that the user may select if the user desires to order an audio clip for the given race. The order may be transmitted to transaction processing and subscription management.

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system 24 for processing. The wagering application may provide the user with an opportunity to order real-time audio clips or to order prerecorded audio clips on demand. If the user orders a real-time audio clip
5 (e.g., a clip of a particular race), the audio clip for the race may be provided to the user in real time with speaker 52 of cellular telephone 46 when the race is run. If the user orders a prerecorded audio clip, the system may play back the audio clip at normal audio
10 speed (e.g., using an audio server at transaction processing and subscription management system 24) or may provide the audio clip by downloading it to the cellular telephone at a suitable data rate.

Whether provided in real-time or on demand,
15 audio clips may be provided to cellular telephone 46 over a telephone link. For example, audio clips may be provided over a telephone link between cellular telephone 46 and transaction processing and subscription management system 24, over a telephone
20 link between cellular telephone 46 and video and audio production system 14 such as link 44n of FIG. 1, or over any other suitable telephone link between the source or distribution point for audio clips and the cellular telephone. Audio may also be distributed
25 using paths such as these when the user is using user telephone equipment 32 (FIG. 1) that is based on a standard (non-cellular) telephone.

If desired, cellular telephone users and users of standard telephones may order audio clips over
30 the telephone by interacting with interactive voice response (IVR) equipment at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 or other suitable

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equipment capable of supporting interactions between the interactive wagering application and a telephone. The IVR equipment (or other suitable equipment) allows the system to play audio prompts for the user. The user may respond to the system by pressing buttons on their telephone, thereby transmitting dual-tone multifrequency (DTMF) signals to the system in response to the audio prompts.

The user's responses may be used to select from among various options. For example, the user may select options for placing a wager. As shown in FIG. 4, the user may be provided with an opportunity to order audio clips during the process of placing a wager. The user may create a wager by pressing telephone keys in response to audible prompts to select a racetrack, race, wager type, horse, wager amount, etc. After the user has created the wager, the system may provide the user with an audio prompt at step 74 stating that the user may order an audio clip with the wager by pressing one button on user telephone equipment 32 or may place the wager without ordering the audio clip by pressing another button on user telephone equipment 32. If the user presses the button indicating a desire to order the audio clip, the system may process the order for the audio clip at step 76, before processing the user's wager at step 78. If the user presses the button indicating a desire to place the wager without ordering the audio clip, the system may process the user's wager at step 78 directly.

If desired, the user may place an order for a racing-related audio clip using the interactive voice response capabilities of the system at a stage other

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than when placing a wager. For example, the user may order an audio clip of a race after it has been run even if the user has not placed a wager on the race. This may be desirable as a handicapping tool if the user wishes to judge the performance of a particular horse.

Illustrative steps involved in ordering audio with system 10 are shown in FIG. 5. At step 80, the user may be provided with an opportunity to order racing-related audio. For example, the user may be provided with an opportunity to order an audio clip of a race by selecting a menu option on a display such as display 56 of cellular telephone 46 or may be provided with an opportunity to use a standard telephone to respond to audio prompts provided by interactive voice response equipment at transaction processing and subscription management system 24 that allow the user to order an audio clip of a race.

At step 82, audio may be provided to the user in the form of audio clips, audio segments, or continuous audio. The audio that is provided to the user is typically related to wagering, but may include content not directly related to wagering (e.g., weather, news, and the like). If the wagering application supported by system 10 is an interactive wagering application for horse racing, audio may be provided for races, jockey interviews, handicapping reports or commentary, weather reports, track conditions, promotional or advertising information, information on products that may be ordered over the telephone using the interactive voice response equipment, etc. These examples are merely

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illustrative, any suitable type of audio information may be provided by the system if desired.

The user may be provided with an opportunity to order real-time clips at step 80. For example, the
5 user may be provided with an opportunity to order an audio clip of a particular race that has not been run. When the race is run, the user is provided with live audio of the race at step 82. Real-time clips may also be provided for interviews, weather reports, etc.

10 Audio may be recorded and stored on a server at transaction processing and subscription management system 24, a server at video and audio production system 14, or a server or other suitable recording device located at any other suitable location. When
15 the user desires to order such recorded audio, the user may obtain information on what audio is available and may place an order for audio content by interacting with, for example, options displayed on display 56 of cellular telephone 46 or audible prompts provided by
20 interactive voice response equipment.

Because system 10 is capable of providing audio content over telephone lines at step 82, users of standard telephones or cellular telephones are able to enjoy racing-related audio without being required to
25 have access to interactive wagering platforms such as a set-top box systems or desktop computer systems. For example, a user with a cellular telephone may listen to an audio clip of a race on which the user placed a wager even while the user is in an automobile, on a
30 train, or otherwise isolated from a set-top box or desktop terminal. A user may also be able to access

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the audio service from a pay telephone or from a telephone at work.

If desired, the audio that is made available over telephone lines to users with telephones may be made available to users with access to other interactive wagering platforms, such as users at user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20. For example, if a user is using a handheld computing device, the user may access race-related audio over a wireless cellular telephone connection or other wireless connection that is provided as a feature of the handheld computing device. Such information may be provided to the handheld computing device in real time or on demand. If a particular audio clip need not be provided in real time, the clip may be transmitted as part of an e-mail or paging message, as an attachment to such an e-mail or paging message, or using any other suitable wireless transmission technique.

Audio clips may be provided as voice mail messages at step 82. Such voice mail messages may be provided over the telephone lines and left on the user's telephone using normal voice mail procedures, or may be transmitted directly into the user's voice mailbox. For example, the telephone system at a user's place of work may have a dedicated number that may be called when it is desired to leave a voice mail message for a party without dialing the party's direct-dial number. Transaction processing and subscription management system 24, video and audio production system 14, or other suitable equipment in the system with access to the audio clips may place a call to this dedicated number and leave the audio clip as a voice

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mail message without disturbing the user. The user may be notified of the message by the conventional voice-mail indicator light on the user's telephone that indicates when voice mail messages have been received.

- 5 Similarly, audio clips for the user may be provided as paging messages or cellular telephone messages without disturbing the user with a direct-dial telephone call.

- A user may wish to be provided with a reminder for an audio clip that has been ordered in advance. One way in which the system can remind the user of an audio clip is by placing a telephone call to the user when it is time to provide the audio clip to the user over the telephone. As shown in FIG. 6, after a user has ordered an audio clip (e.g., by interacting with interactive voice response equipment in the system when placing a wager), an audio prompt may be provided to the user at step 84 that directs the user to press a "1" if a reminder is desired and a "2" if no reminder is desired. If the user presses "1," the system may provide the reminder to the user at step 86. For example, the system may place a telephone call to the user and begin playing an ordered audio clip in real time as a race is being run. If the user presses "2," the system does not provide a reminder to the user.
- 25 The user may therefore be required to remember when the clip is to be provided and may be required to place a telephone call to the system to receive the audio clip.

- A cellular telephone user may also set a reminder by interacting with the interactive voice response equipment in the system. If desired, a cellular telephone user may also set reminders when interacting with visual menu options provided on
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display 56 of cellular telephone 46. As shown in FIG. 7, for example, the user may be provided with a screen such as screen 88 on display 56 that contains information 90 on a wager that the user has created.

5 The user may be provided with options such as a new option 92 that allows the user to create a new wager and a delete option 94 that allows the user to delete the present wager. Another option that may be provided is a send option 96. Send option 96 allows the user to

10 electronically place a wager.

If the user selects send option 96 with highlight region 98, the system may process the user's wager. In addition, a screen such as screen 100 of FIG. 8 may be displayed on display 56 (FIG. 2). Screen

15 100 may contain information 102 that asks the user whether the user is interested in ordering an audio clip with a reminder at the same time that the wager is placed (i.e., as part of the same transaction). Screen 100 may contain yes option 104 and no option 106. If

20 the user selects yes option 104, the system may process the order for the audio clip and the reminder. When the race is about to be run, the system may place a telephone call to the user and play the audio clip. If the user selects no option 106, the system may accept

25 the wager without processing an audio clip order or setting a reminder.

Illustrative steps involved in using telephone calls as reminders are shown in FIG. 9. At step 108, the system may provide the user with an

30 opportunity to set a reminder. For example, the system may provide the user of a telephone with an opportunity to set a reminder by interacting with the interactive

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voice response capabilities of the system. The system may provide the user of a cellular telephone that has a display with an opportunity to set a reminder by interacting with options on the display. The system
5 may also provide a user at user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 with an opportunity to set a reminder. For example, user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 may be used to display various on-screen options that allow the user to set a
10 reminder. The reminder may be set at the same time that an audio clip is being ordered or may be set at another suitable time. The reminder may also be set at the same time that a wager is being place or may be set at another suitable time.

15 The system may remind the user of the audio clip at step 110 by placing a telephone call to the user. The telephone call may only contain a reminder message (e.g., "the audio clip you ordered will be available in 10 minutes"). Such a telephone call may
20 be followed by the telephone call that provides the audio clip to the user. If desired, the telephone call that is used to provide the audio clip may itself serve as a reminder. For example, the telephone call may be used to provide a message such as "the audio clip you
25 ordered follows," followed by the audio clip. The steps of FIG. 9 may be used to remind users with standard telephones, cellular telephones, or other user telephone equipment 32.

Another way in which to provide a reminder
30 involves audibly or visibly alerting the user using a locally-generated reminder at a cellular telephone or the like. Illustrative steps involved in this approach

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are shown in FIG. 10. At step 112, the user may be provided with an opportunity to set a reminder. For example, the system may provide the user of a telephone with an opportunity to set a reminder by interacting with the interactive voice response capabilities of system 10. The system may also provide a user at user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 with an opportunity to set a reminder. For example, user television equipment 22 or user computer equipment 20 may be used to display various on-screen options that allow the user to set a reminder. The reminder may be set at the same time that an audio clip is being ordered or may be set at another suitable time. The reminder may also be set at the same time that a wager is being placed or may be set at another suitable time.

If the user has a cellular telephone, user-selectable reminder options may be displayed on display 56. If the user selects an appropriate reminder option at step 112, a locally-operated clock may be provided with information on the time at which the ordered audio clip is to begin. During step 114, at or just before the time at which the clip is to begin, the cellular telephone may generate an audible tone or other suitable sound using speaker 52 or may display a visual reminder using display 56. If the cellular telephone is capable of vibrating or otherwise physically alerting the user, such capabilities may be used to remind the user of the audio clip. A combination of such notification approaches may be used if desired.

Another suitable approach for reminding a user about an audio clip involves sending an e-mail message, paging message or the like to the user. Such

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reminders may be provided to a user with a cellular telephone that has e-mail, paging, or other such messaging capabilities, or may be provided to a user with a telephone without such capabilities if the user has other equipment (e.g., a pager or the like) that provides the user with access to paging messages or e-mail. Steps involved in reminding a user of an audio clip with an e-mail or paging message or the like are shown in FIG. 11.

10 At step 116 of FIG. 11, the user is provided with an opportunity to set a reminder for an audio clip. The reminder may be set using any suitable arrangement, such as the arrangements described in connection with steps 108 and 112. After the user has
15 set a reminder at step 116, the system may provide the user with a reminder at step 118. The reminder may be provided using e-mail, paging techniques, or any other type of messaging technique.

The illustrative reminder techniques
20 described in connection with FIGS. 6-11 are merely illustrative. Any suitable reminder technique may be used. If desired, reminders may be set using one platform (user telephone equipment 32, user television equipment 22, or user computer equipment 20) and the
25 audio clips provided to the user at another platform.

Moreover, the user may order audio clips that contain audio information other than the audio of a race. Steps involved in providing such audio clips to the user are shown in FIG. 12. At step 120, the user
30 may be provided with an opportunity to order audio. For example, the user may be provided with an opportunity to order audio clips of races, interviews,

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handicapping reports or commentary, news, weather, advertisements, information for product ordering, etc. At step 122, after the user has selected a desired audio clip, the system may provide the clip to the user. The clip may be provided in real-time. For example, an audio clip of an interview may be provided as the interview is taking place. The clips may also be provided on demand (e.g., from an audio clip server).

Although the present invention has been described primarily in the context of audio provided to telephones, the audio features of the present invention may also be provided using other platforms, such as set-top boxes, personal computers (including desktop computers and handheld computing devices), or other suitable devices. Although some of these platforms include hardware capable of supporting both audio and video, it may be advantageous to use system 10 to provide audio clips to at least some of the equipment without an accompanying video component. One advantage of this type of arrangement is that the operator of system 10 is assured that racing-related audio information is widely distributed and is not only provided to users that have video-capable equipment.

If desired, a user may be provided with an opportunity to order an audio clip without creating a wager. This is shown in FIG. 13. The example of FIG. 13 is described in the context of telephone-based ordering for clarity, but may also apply to other platforms such as on-line ordering using a personal computer.

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At step 124 of FIG. 13, after the user has telephoned the interactive wagering service and provided account number and password information, the service may provide the user with audio prompts that

5 allow the user to choose whether to build a wager or to order an audio clip without building a wager. If the user chooses to build a wager, the service may provide the user with an opportunity to build the wager at step 126. For example, the service may provide audio

10 prompts that allow the user to select a desired racetrack, race, wager type, horse, wager amount, etc. The service may provide the user with an opportunity to order an audio clip at step 128. For example, the user may be provided with audio prompts that allow the user

15 to order a clip. The clip may be ordered as part of the wager building process of step 126 or following the construction of a complete wager.

If the user chose to order a clip at step 124 without building a wager, the user may be provided with

20 an opportunity to order an audio clip at step 130. For example, the interactive wagering service may provide the user with audio prompts that allow the user to select a desired racetrack and race for which the audio clip is to be provided.

25 The interactive wagering service may allow the user to select from various delivery options when the user orders an audio clip. For example, after the user has used the interactive wagering service to order a given audio clip over the telephone, the user may be

30 provided with audio prompts that allow the user to choose between telephone and e-mail delivery. This is illustrated in FIG. 14. Although illustrated in FIG.

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14 in connection with telephone-based access, the features of FIG. 14 may be implemented using on-line access arrangements (e.g., based on personal computers, etc.) or other suitable access arrangements if desired.

5 At step 132 of FIG. 14, the interactive wagering service may provide audio prompts that allow the user to select between telephone delivery and e-mail delivery. If the user chooses to have the clip delivered by telephone at step 132, the interactive
10 wagering service may ask the user to select which telephone number the service should use at step 134. In particular, the service may provide audio prompts that allow the user to direct the service to use a default telephone number or a new telephone number at
15 step 136. The user's default telephone number may be provided to the interactive wagering service when the user subscribes to the service. Providing the user with an option to select this number allows the user to avoid entering the digits of the telephone number.

20 If the user desires to have the interactive wagering service call the user at a different number, the user may be provided with an opportunity to enter that number at step 136. This feature may be useful, for example, when the user is traveling and cannot be
25 reached at the default number.

 After the user has selected a desired telephone number at step 136, the user may be provided with an opportunity to select a desired time at which to have the audio clip delivered. For example, the
30 interactive wagering service may provide audio prompts at step 138 that allow the user to direct the service to provide the clip to the user at the time of the race

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or at a particular time after the race has been run
(e.g., an hour later).

If the user chose to receive the audio clip
by e-mail at step 132, the service may provide the user
with an opportunity to select an e-mail address. For
5 example, the service may provide audio prompts to the
user at step 140 that ask the user to direct the
service to use a default e-mail address or a new e-mail
address. The service allows the user to select the
desired e-mail address at step 142. The user's default
10 e-mail address may be provided to the interactive
wagering service when the user subscribes to the
service. Providing the user with an option to select
the default e-mail address allows the user to avoid
15 navigating audio options to enter a new e-mail address.

If the user desires to have the interactive
wagering service send the audio prompt to the user at a
new e-mail address, the user may be provided with an
opportunity to enter the alphanumeric characters for
the address at step 142. The user may be provided with
20 prompts, for example, that ask the user to select a
group of letters (e.g., the letters JKL) by pressing
the telephone key that is associated with that group
(e.g., number 5). The user may then be provided with
25 prompts that allow the user to select which of the
numbers in the group the user wishes to select. This
two-step selection process for entering each
alphanumeric character is somewhat involved, so users
who are ordering e-mail delivery services at new e-mail
30 addresses may prefer to order such services on-line
rather than over the telephone. If desired, the e-mail

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address selection feature may be omitted for telephone-based systems.

After the user has selected a desired e-mail address at step 142, the user may be provided with an opportunity to select a time for the e-mail to be delivered at step 138 (if desired). The interactive wagering service may deliver the clip to the user over the telephone or as an e-mail attachment or the like at step 144.

As shown in FIG. 15, the user may obtain audio clips after a race has been run. At step 148, the interactive wagering service may store the audio clip for later retrieval. Audio clips may be stored for all races or for popular races, etc.

If the user decides to access the audio clip on-line, the user may access the interactive wagering service at step 148. For example, the service may provide the user with an opportunity to log into the service and to select whether to download the clip for later use or to receive the clip immediately as a streaming audio file.

While the user is on-line, the interactive wagering service may promote the availability of audio clips that will be available in the near future. For example, the service may provide on-screen options that allow the user to order clips for races that will be starting in the next few minutes at step 150. If the user places such an order, the wagering service may provide materials (e.g., audio and visual materials) to the user until the race begins at step 152. For example, the service may present advertisements,

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opportunities to place wagers, opportunities to purchase products, weather information, etc.

When the race begins, the service may provide steaming audio for the user at step 154.

5 If the user calls the interactive wagering service by telephone, the service may provide the user with an opportunity to choose to listen to a recorded race or an upcoming race at step 156. For example, the service may provide audio prompts to the user that
10 allow the user to listen to the race that the user ordered. If the user chooses to listen to a previously ordered audio clip, the service may play the clip back for the user at step 158. The service may also promote various races that are starting shortly (e.g., in the
15 next few minutes) at step 156. The user may be provided with an opportunity to order an upcoming race of this type at step 160.

After the race has been ordered, the service may play certain advertisements or other information
20 for the user at step 152. For example, the service may play a news clip or a race description or may promote a wagering opportunity. At step 154, when the race is being run and audio for the race is available, the service may provide the user with the audio for the
25 race. The user need not ever hang up the telephone between step 146 and step 154.

The user may be interested in hearing an audio clip for a race, but might not have a particular race in mind. If desired, the user may contact the
30 interactive wagering service to obtain information on races that are upcoming in the next few minutes (or

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other suitable short time interval). This is shown in FIG. 16.

At step 162, after the user has contacted the interactive wagering service (e.g., by telephone, on-line, or using a television-equipment-based arrangement), the service may provide the user with an opportunity to select a desired race. After the race has been selected, the service may provide material to the user at step 164, until the selected race begins.

10 For example, the service may provide an on-line user or a user with user television equipment with text, audio, and video material such as news, race information on the upcoming race, promotional information, interactive wagering opportunities, etc. A user who has connected

15 to the service over the telephone may be provided with news audio clips, audio information on the upcoming race, audio prompts to place a wager, etc.

At step 166, the user may be provided with the audio for the race. On-line users and users with

20 user television equipment may receive audio and video for the race or may receive only audio information. Users who have connected to the service over the telephone may be provided with audio for the race. The user need not disconnect from the service or hang up

25 the telephone between step 162 and step 166.

The foregoing is merely illustrative of the principles of this invention and various modifications can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

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What Is Claimed is:

1. A method for using an interactive wagering system to provide racing-related audio clips to users without accompanying video components, comprising:

providing a user at user equipment with an opportunity to order a desired racing-related audio clip without an accompanying video component; and
providing the audio clip without accompanying video to the user equipment.

2. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user at the telephone with an opportunity to order the desired racing-related audio clip by pressing telephone buttons in response to voice prompts.

3. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the audio clip without accompanying video to the telephone over a telephone link.

4. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone with a display, the method further comprising displaying menu options on the display that allow the user to order the audio clip.

5. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone with a

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display, the method further comprising providing the audio clip to the cellular telephone over a telephone link.

6. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to set a reminder for the audio clip.

7. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to set a reminder for the audio clip by pressing buttons on the telephone in response to audio prompts.

8. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone having a display, the method further comprising displaying options on the display that allow the user to set a reminder for the audio clip.

9. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user with a reminder for the audio clip by using the system to place a telephone call to the telephone.

10. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising placing a telephone call to the telephone with the system and automatically playing the audio clip for the user at the telephone.

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11. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the audio clip is an audio clip of a given race that is to be run at a given time and wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising placing a telephone call to the telephone at the given time and playing the audio clip of the given race to the user in real time.

12. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone, the method further comprising providing a reminder for the audio clip to the user by providing a locally-generated audible notification to the user with the cellular telephone.

13. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone with a display, the method further comprising displaying a visible reminder for the audio clip on the display.

14. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone with a display and the audio clip is an audio clip of a given race that is to be run at a given time, the method further comprising displaying a visible reminder for the audio clip on the display at the given time.

15. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a cellular telephone with a display and the audio clip is an audio clip of a given race that is to be run at a given time, the method further comprising providing a locally-generated

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audible notification to the user with the cellular telephone at the given time.

16. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment has paging capabilities, the method further comprising providing a reminder for the audio clip to the user by transmitting a paging message to the user equipment.

17. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment has e-mail capabilities, the method further comprising providing a reminder for the audio clip to the user by transmitting an e-mail message to the user equipment.

18. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager with the user equipment.

19. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager with the telephone.

20. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager with the telephone at the same time that the user places the order for the audio clip.

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20. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager with the telephone at the same time that the user places the order for the audio clip; and
providing the user with a reminder for the audio clip.

21. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a telephone and wherein the audio clip is an audio clip for a given race to be run at a given time, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager on the race with the telephone at the same time that the user places the order for the audio clip; and

providing the user with a reminder for the audio clip at the telephone at the given time.

22. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is user television equipment, the method further comprising providing the audio clip to the user with the user television equipment.

23. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a handheld computing device, the method further comprising providing the audio clip to the user with the handheld computing device.

24. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a handheld computing device and

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the audio clip is an audio clip of a race to be run at a given time, the method further comprising providing the audio clip for the race to the user with the handheld computing device at the given time in real time.

25. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the user equipment is a handheld computing device and the audio clip is an audio clip of a race to be run at a given time, the method further comprising providing the audio clip for the race to the user with the handheld computing device after the given time.

26. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the system includes multiple user equipment platforms, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to place a wager using one platform while listening to the audio clip with another platform.

27. The method defined in claim 1 wherein providing the audio clip to the user equipment comprises providing an audio clip of an interview to the user equipment.

28. The method defined in claim 1 wherein providing the audio clip to the user equipment comprises providing an audio clip of weather information to the user equipment.

29. The method defined in claim 1 wherein providing the audio clip to the user equipment

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comprises providing an audio clip containing news information to the user equipment.

30. The method defined in claim 1 wherein providing the audio clip to the user equipment comprises providing an audio clip containing handicapping information to the user equipment.

31. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising providing the audio clip of the given race to the user without requiring the user to create a wager.

32. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user at the telephone with an opportunity to choose whether to have the audio clip delivered by telephone or e-mail.

33. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a computer, the method further comprising providing the user at the computer with an opportunity to choose whether to have the audio clip delivered by telephone or e-mail.

34. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user at the telephone with an opportunity to select a desired telephone number for delivery of the audio clip.

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35. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a computer, the method further comprising providing the user at the computer with an opportunity to select a desired telephone number for delivery of the audio clip.

36. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the user at the telephone with an opportunity to select a desired e-mail address for delivery of the audio clip.

37. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a computer, the method further comprising providing the user at the computer with an opportunity to select a desired e-mail address for delivery of the audio clip.

38. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising using the user equipment to provide the user with an opportunity to select a time at which to deliver the audio clip.

39. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a computer, the method further comprising providing the audio clip to the computer as streaming audio.

40. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the user equipment is a computer, the method further comprising providing the audio clip to the computer as a download for later playback.

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41. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising using the user equipment to present an opportunity for the user to play back a stored audio clip and to order an audio clip that will be starting in the next few minutes.

42. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising using the user equipment to process an order for an audio clip that is about to start in the next few minutes.

43. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising:
 using the user equipment to process an order for an upcoming audio clip that is about to start in the next few minutes; and
 using the user equipment to provide the user with audio material while the user waits for the upcoming audio clip to start.

44. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising:
 using the user equipment to process an order for an upcoming audio clip that is about to start in the next few minutes; and
 using the user equipment to provide the user with audio news material while the user waits for the upcoming audio clip to start.

45. The method defined in claim 1 further comprising:

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using the user equipment to process an order for an upcoming audio clip that is about to start in the next few minutes; and

using the user equipment to provide the user with audio race information while the user waits for the upcoming audio clip to start.

46. An interactive wagering system for providing racing-related audio clips to users without accompanying video components, comprising:

user equipment with which a user may place an order for a desired racing-related audio clip without an accompanying video component; and

a transaction processing and subscription management system that processes the order and that provides the desired racing-related audio clip to the user.

47. The system defined in claim 46 wherein the user equipment comprises a telephone.

48. The system defined in claim 46 wherein the user equipment comprises a cellular telephone with a display on which a reminder for the audio clip is displayed.

49. A method for using an interactive wagering system to provide racing-related audio clips to users without accompanying video components, comprising:

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providing a user with an opportunity to electronically place a wager on a given race that is to be run; and

providing an audio clip of the given race to user equipment with which the user listens to the audio clip, wherein there is no accompanying video component associated with the audio clip.

50. / The method defined in claim 49 wherein providing the audio clip comprises providing the audio clip in real time as the race is run.

51. The method defined in claim 49 further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to order the audio clip when the user places the wager.

52. The method defined in claim 49 wherein the user equipment is a telephone, the method further comprising providing the audio clip of the given race to the telephone so that the user listens to the audio clip with the telephone.

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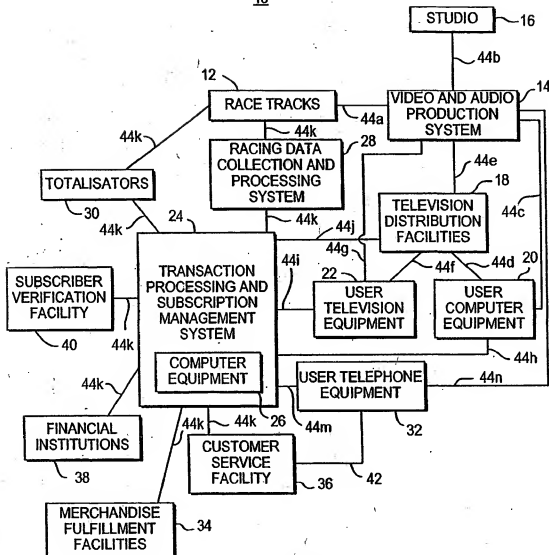


FIG. 1

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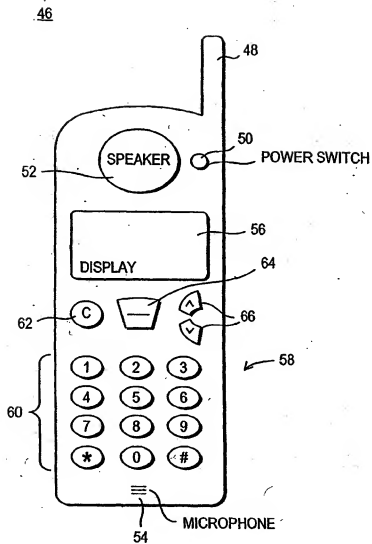


FIG. 2

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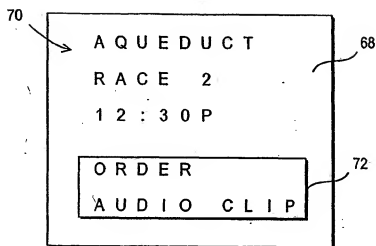


FIG. 3

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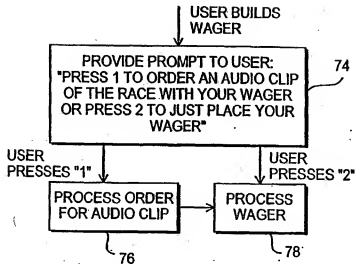


FIG. 4

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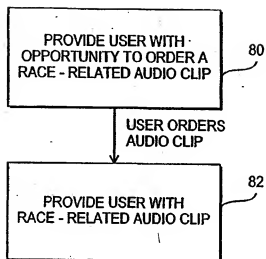


FIG. 5

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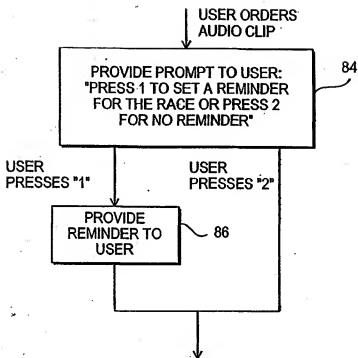


FIG. 6

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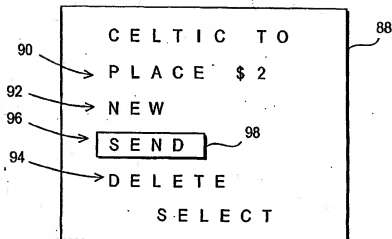


FIG. 7

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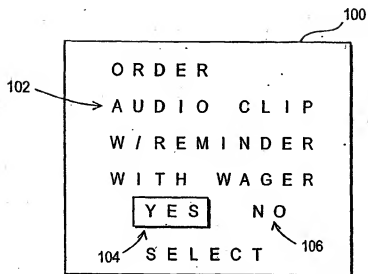


FIG. 8

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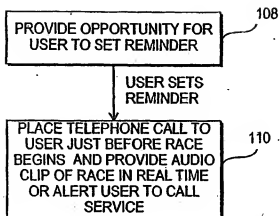


FIG. 9

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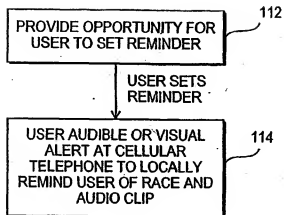


FIG. 10

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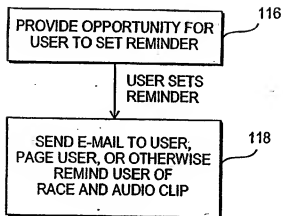


FIG. 11

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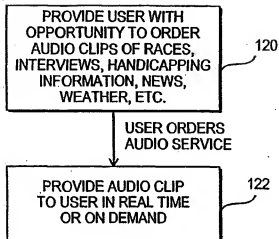


FIG. 12

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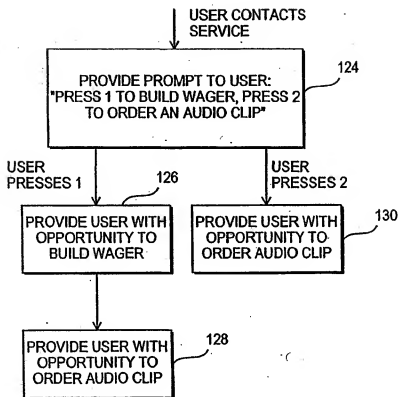


FIG. 13

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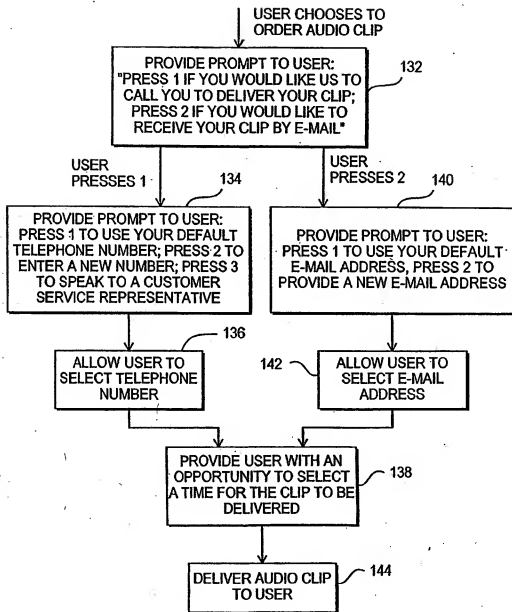


FIG. 14

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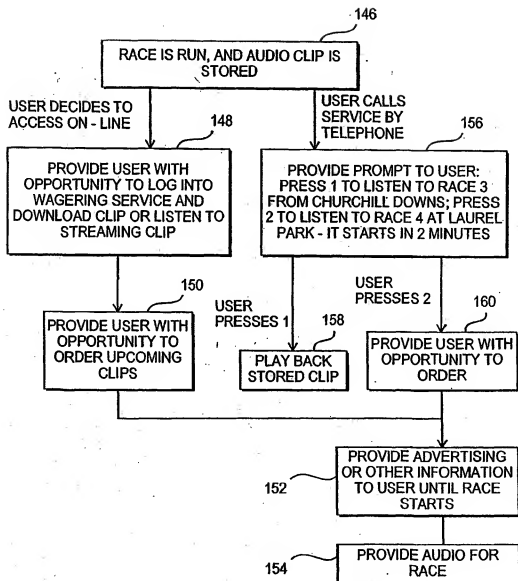


FIG. 15

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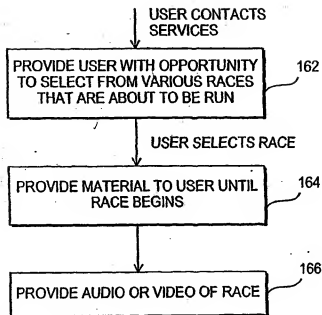


FIG. 16

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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

DECLARATION OF NON-ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 17(2)(a), Rules 13ter.1(c) and Rule 39)


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Applicant ODS PROPERTIES, INC.		

This International Searching Authority hereby declares, according to Article 17(2)(a), that no international search report will be established on the international application for the reasons indicated below:

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 - c. ☐ plant varieties.
 - d. ☐ animal varieties.
 - e. ☐ essentially biological processes for the production of plants and animals, other than microbiological processes and the products of such processes.
 - f. ☒ schemes, rules or methods of doing business.
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 ☐ the claims
 ☐ the drawings
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The claims relate to subject matter for which no search is required according to Rule 39 PCT. Given that the claims are formulated in terms of such subject matter or merely specify commonplace features relating to its technological implementation, the search examiner could not establish any technical problem which might potentially have required an inventive step to overcome. Hence it was not possible to carry out a meaningful search into the state of the art (Art. 17(2)(a)(i) and (ii) PCT; see Guidelines Part B Chapter VIII, 1-6).

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guideline C-VI, 8.5), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2) declaration be overcome.

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